

## THE SUPPLY OF FOOD FISH.

A DISCUSSION AS TO WHETHER IT IS DIMINISHING.

MANY GAME COMMISSIONERS TESTIFY—OLD SALTS TELL ABOUT THE CATCH OF MENHADEN AND DECLARE THAT NEW-FANGLED IMPLEMENTS ARE NOT DESTROYING THE FINNY CREATURES TOO FAST.

The call issued by the New-York Fish Commission to all persons interested in the demand and supply of fish in the States along the Atlantic Coast, and particularly to those interested in the preservation of food fish, was responded to yesterday by a gathering which crowded two parlors of the Gerlach, in West Twenty-seventh-st., and which represented the Fish Commissions, the fishing industries and the game protection societies of all the seaboard States from Maine to North Carolina.

The primary object of the conference was the discussion of the supply and demand of food fish. The call was the outcome of a belief, entertained by some of the Fish Commissioners of this State and by members of the Association for the Protection of Game, that food fish were growing more and more scarce, and that this was due to the increasing industry of menhaden fishing and the use of the pound nets. To determine whether the supply of food fish was really diminishing, and if so, to detect the cause and suggest a remedy, the conference set to work at half-past 10 o'clock taking testimony.

REPRESENTATIVES WHO WERE THERE.

William H. Bowman, of Rochester, a member of the State Fish Commission, was chosen chairman, and Edward P. Doyle, of New-York, also of the Commission, secretary. Other Commissioners present were L. D. Huntington, David G. Hackney, Robert Hamilton and A. Sylvester Jollie, of the New-York Commission; J. M. R. Southwick and George A. Bliss, of Rhode Island; P. W. Page and Robert D. Foshee, of New-Jersey; H. C. Page and Colonel John Guy, of Pennsylvania; John S. Sudler, of Maryland; E. A. Brackett and C. Y. Young, of Massachusetts; Marshal McDonald, of North Carolina; R. E. Follett and Dr. William Hudson, of Connecticut. The game protection societies were represented by James E. Evans, of New-Hampshire; Dr. F. M. Knobell, Edward Thompson, Dr. Bushfield Dean, Frederick Mather, John D. Quackenbush and Robert F. Walsh, of New-York, and C. F. Chamberlain, of Massachusetts.

The fisheries and fish dealers were represented by the majority of those present, among whom were John O. Lewis, James B. Church, D. F. Church, and George M. Vail, Rhode Island; Sylvester M. Johnson, B. T. De Batts, H. B. Joyce and Atkins Hughes, Massachusetts; David Banks, Caleb Haley, John T. Homard, A. E. Potter, C. T. Tuck, George F. Morgan, A. E. Keeves and Edward Sherfield, New-York; J. Walling, N. Lockwood, New-Jersey; Geo. M. Vail, Long Island; Luther French, of New-Jersey; and Robert T. Chalkley, Edwin R. Kelsey and Joseph Belser, Connecticut. In addition to these were many who cast their votes for the cause of pound nets and whose opinions on "fish an' fishin'" formed the most interesting and the most valuable part of the testimony. There were also a few "celebrities," such as W. W. Port, "Big" Smith, a famous old fisherman, and Sakaye Sawatari, World's Fair Commissioner of the Japanese Fisheries Society.

TAKING THE TESTIMONY.

Chairman Bowman said that it had been maintained that the catch of sea fish absolutely could not be controlled, or even noticeably affected, by the use of fishing implements. Whether this was so or not the chairman hoped would be shown by the testimony and statistics of those present. It was of the most vital importance that food fish should be so protected that the supply of them would not diminish and their price increase.

Then began the giving of the testimony. Some of the speakers said that the calling of the conference argued a condition of affairs that was not true—a diminution in the supply of food fish.

Food fish, they maintained, were not more plentiful than ever before.

Fish like other kinds of game had seasons of scarcity, but such seasons had always been followed by periods of unusual abundance. On this point the conference agreed.

Those using pound nets and artificial instruments for catching fish asserted that the supply of food fish had not diminished—particulars not being given. The menhaden industry from the menhaden nets and pound nets were taken in any amount, they were marketed as food fish. This theory was maintained by all the representatives of the menhaden industry from the Carolinas.

According to this statement was the paper of L. D. Huntington, president of the New-York Fish Commission. Mr. Huntington, in his speech, said that the menhaden nets had been given before a committee of Congress that was then engaged in the consideration of the bill.

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